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ABSTRACT

An exploratory study of appropriate models for an efficient and effective national research center on adult literacy in Canada used an informal survey of documents, a convenience sample of people who have some stake or experience in adult literacy and/or research administration, and information about some existing and proposed research institutions in Canada and the United States. The institutions were the Centre for the Study of Adult Literacy at Carleton University, Brock University, McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, Literacy and Language Training Resource Centre, St. Francis Xavier University, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy and the Literacy Research Center at Penn State University, Center for Applied Linguistics, and the proposed U.S. National Center for Adult Literacy. The critical factors in a model are its definition of literacy, scope of work, stakeholders and their needs, researchers' specialties, who sets the research agenda, and what work other than research will be done. Possible models include centers within universities, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and quasigovernmental bodies. Steps to creating an acceptable model are to conduct an inventory, needs assessment, and feasibility study. The study recommends 5-year funding of a provincial or federal nongovernmental organization with a director, board of trustees, and a permanent staff of two or three. An alternate recommendation is a combination center such as the Center for Applied Linguistics and a foundation. (CML)

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Literacy Research Centre(s) in Canada: Options

Report, July 1989

Barbara Burnaby

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Introduction

The research question I have addressed in this brief study is **what would models be for (an) efficient and effective national research centre(s) on adult literacy in Canada.** In studying this question I have conducted an informal survey of documents and a convenience sample of people who have some stake/experience in the fields of adult literacy and/or research administration, and researched and described in general terms some existing research institutions in Canada and the U. S. From an analysis of these data I have discussed a number of critical factors that the participants (interviewees) felt were important in developing a research centre model. I have added to these from my own experience to round out the possibilities. Next, I have described some classical models with comments on their advantages and disadvantages in light of real models described and the views of the participants. Finally, I have made some suggestions about preferred models and further courses of action.

From the beginning I wish to make it clear that I have tried to keep an open mind on what 'research' is. There is much needed adult literacy work that might be classified as research in hopes that it will receive funding under that rubric or because it is seen as research from certain perspectives. In the first few sections of this paper, I have not tried to make distinctions in this area, but later in the paper I attempt to find categorizations of work in adult literacy that can be placed in contexts in which it can best be advanced. For these reasons I have expanded the examples and discussion in this report away from a central focus on university research centres (a focus implied in the statement of work for letter of agreement for this study) and have included other kinds of institutional options throughout. Since I have included many university related examples, I hope that this approach is acceptable to those who have commissioned this study.

This study is purely exploratory and cannot be considered to be systematic in that the sample of participants (interviewees) was not rationalized nor was an interview schedule developed for my conversations with the participants. There are two reasons for this. First, I undertook the work at short notice, had a short timeframe in which to complete the study, and the budget was very small. Secondly, the topics of research and literacy are vast, complex, and a minefield of contentious academic, political, and social views. Therefore, my interview strategy was to tell participants, who represented a considerable range of experience in the literacy field, that I was studying models for national research centres on literacy and to let them react to that as they would in hopes

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of gaining a perspective on as many dimensions as possible. I am pleased to say that virtually all the interviews were as voluable, constructive, informed, and interesting as I had hoped. I interviewed 19 participants in all including all but one of those (or their designates) suggested by National Literacy Secretariat staff. Unfortunately I was not able to contact Serge Wagner of UQAM despite repeated calls. His views from the Francophone perspective would have added greatly to this report. I did not interview any representatives of literacy advocacy or delivery organizations because it was suggested to me that I keep the profile of this study low. I took the position that, if I interviewed some of these key players in this casual study, a general concern would be raised in this constituency that they were not formally being consulted. It is essential that these groups be consulted, but in a large-scale and systematic way. In addition to the interviews, I read a number of documents which proposed literacy research facilities or described existing ones. Please see the appendix for a list of participants and documents consulted.

In light of the limited and exploratory nature of this study, I have compiled and analysed the data qualitatively. Each item in the discussion below is based on statements by at least one participant or document; where participants disagreed I note both sides; and I note precise statements of some participants where appropriate. I have added some points of my own in the section on critical factors in order to add to the range of possibilities. The final section on suggestions reflects my personal analysis of the foregoing sections but I note the views of participants there as well.

Some Existing and Proposed Literacy Research Institutions

The following are descriptions of some existing and proposed institutions that involve research on adult literacy. Because they are all different in many ways, no attempt was made to compare them systematically. Comments made by those interviewed on the advantages and disadvantages of their institutions are included.

Carleton University in Ottawa has a research unit called the **Centre for the Study of Adult Literacy**. Dr. Stan Jones is the Director and he reports to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The centre conducts research projects, largely related to testing at the moment, with funding from various government sources, and cooperates with other non-governmental agencies in project work. It has a growing collection of information and materials on adult literacy with an emphasis on hard to get and ephemeral material. Support for the centre comes from research grants from governments, provincial support for research from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, revenues from the sales of tests, Ontario work/study programs which employ students to work in the unit, and small amounts of money from the NGOs which the centre has helped. Dr. Jones, as Director, makes the decisions with the approval of the Dean. At the moment the centre has no advisory board of external specialists. He maintains informal connections with other

relevant institutions such as the Literacy Volunteers of America Centre in Syracuse. He made a point of the importance to him of having contacts with a variety of organizations through computer electronic mail.

Dr. Jones understands the strengths of the centre to include knowledge of the literature, knowledge of research methods, and technical skills (such as librarianship) that an academic institution can offer. He notes that relations between university researchers and literacy practitioners are complicated. He expects practitioners to define the problems for research and he can offer help on research methods and the literature on what has been done elsewhere. He believes that literacy practitioners can get the skills to do good research. One of the problems in this area involves the complex and differing sets of learned behaviours and assumptions inherent in the roles of academics, literacy practitioners, and literacy learners. A problem in establishing a framework for research in the centre is to draw the line between literacy and other forms of adult education. NGOs would like to have materials developed, but that tends to be difficult and expensive. On the other hand, it is important for practitioners to get support for their work in this area and to get it disseminated.

My understanding of this centre, based on my conversation with Dr. Jones, is that it is largely a one man operation, supported by the university, (1) which collects and disseminates literacy materials that would other wise be difficult for local literacy practitioners to get access to, (2) which conducts literacy research, largely on testing, sponsored by various government bodies, and (3) which consults and cooperates with local literacy agencies in research and development work which they have initiated. As far as I can tell the impact is limited to the applications of the research Dr. Jones is contracted to do and the role he plays in the local literacy network. I see this centre as a small but effective example of cooperation between an academic within a university and governments and local practitioners which have problems that need to be solved.

Dr. Jim Wagner runs a reading research and diagnostic clinic at **Brock University** in St. Catharines. (Reader be warned: there are three people mentioned in this study named Wagner.) This clinic, which is a self-supporting unit within the university through fees from clients, mainly provides a reading diagnostic service and conducts research on literacy acquisition of children. It has staff from within the university and relations with other external agencies for referrals. This unit has become involved with adult literacy since it has subcontracted to work on assessment and treatment of learning disabilities in the Ontario section of Laubach Literacy of Canada's Industrial Literacy Project. My understanding from the interview was that two kinds of problems had arisen in the relationship with Laubach on this project. One was in communicating a fundamental distinction in adult literacy research and treatment between the needs of adults who had been blocked from access to normal educational resources, those whose mother tongue was not an official language, and those who had learning disabilities. For various demographic reasons, one would expect that the proportions of such groups of adult

learners would be different in various parts of the country; therefore Laubach's clients in Toronto should be different from those in, for example, New Brunswick. The second problem was for specialists in the techniques of diagnosis of learning disabilities to be advising volunteers in carrying out an ambitious project of workplace literacy training. It was pointed out that the kinds of learning programs that voluntary literacy agencies normally carry out are not suitable for treatment of adults with learning disabilities. There is considerable interest in this clinic to continue to do diagnostic work and research on adults with literacy problems, but the demand is greater than can be handled at present.

My observation of this situation is that it is a highly specialized and technical unit which has expanded its mandate because of a growing number of adult referrals and the project with Laubach. Its focus of study is an important and largely neglected one in the field of adult literacy. It is willing to expand its energies in the adult direction but is limited in its capacities. Because the work is specialized and technical, it does not integrate easily into the current matrix of general awareness about adult literacy.

The **McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology** has played a part in the **University of Toronto** since 1963 when President Claude Bissell established it as a way of finding a role for Marshall McLuhan within the university. Since all the principal people involved with the program were away during my time for interviewing, I did not get as much information as I would have liked. Please see the appendix for a copy of the page describing the current program from the 1989/90 University of Toronto School of Graduate Studies Calendar. To the best of my knowledge it received funding as well as space from the university in its early years. I do not know how its current core operations or research are supported. It is now largely a teaching and public education program with four courses listed, a newsletter, series of public lectures, and conferences. All faculty associated with it are cross-appointed from other parts of the university.

Because of its strong association with Marshall McLuhan and its mandate to continue his work, the program is known for its highly abstract and theoretical focus. From personal communication, I know that some members of the adult literacy practitioner community were resentful of any public money put into the program because they felt that it was out of touch with immediate needs in the society around it. While theoretical research into communications can surely help to provide frameworks for other kinds of research into adult literacy, elite academic programs are a long social distance from the world of the front line workers and learners in adult literacy programs.

An Ontario-wide **Literacy and Language Training Resource Centre** has been announced in Toronto supported by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments to be operated by the Metro Toronto Library Board. From my reading of the press release of the announcement of the project on May 24, 1989, a conversation with a representative of the Communications and Marketing Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development, and an excerpted version of the feasibility study for the project conducted

by Ogilve, Ogilve and Company, I have gathered some sense of the project to be implemented and the process that shaped its current form. It appears that the original plan was to have a centre in which there would be a clearinghouse of materials for learners and practitioners, a service to evaluate new materials and to develop and publish materials, a (set of) toll free information line(s) that would help learners and their advocates locate suitable services for them in all areas of the province, and research, advisory, and consultative services. As a result of extensive consultation with government people, and representatives of formal and non-formal delivery agencies, it was decided that the Metro Toronto Reference Library (MTRL) should form a centre which would be a clearinghouse for materials for practitioners and learners to include the "vetting, publishing and distributing the best of locally developed materials."

In light of most of the other research centres reported on in this study, the feasibility study for the Toronto centre is particularly interesting since it results from negotiation not between academics and national literacy organizations but between governments and literacy practitioners. It indicates what can be expected to happen if practitioners are really asked for their opinions as well as the kinds of logic of coalitions that governments are likely to want to impose upon a situation. Also, it focusses in on the day to day needs of practitioners and governments rather than the theoretical interests of academics.

At some point in the process of the development of the proposal for this centre ESL and FSL was added to adult basic literacy as a target for the centre. This is an interesting development since E/FSL movements have not acted much in concert with the adult literacy movement until recent years although there was not much friction between them. I have to assume that the fact that the provincial government's link between official language training and adult basic literacy under the rubric of adult basic education had something to do with the combination of these focusses under one centre.

It appears that there was a considerable amount of debate concerning the sponsorship of telephone hotlines where learners and their advocates could get information on suitable local sources of help. The points of contention seemed to concentrate on (1) the ability of hotlines servicing wide geographic areas to be able to keep up to date on appropriate information, and (2) rivalries between existing hotlines which were already established and proposed ones that might encroach on their existing successes. From my recent exerience in evaluating a hotline service on adult education services, I am impressed with the amount of work required in maintaining current information for a local hotline much less including the skills to handle the variety of personal problems that are communicated in connection with simple requests for information about educational opportunities. Thus, I am not surprised that there was division of opinion about jurisdictions for telephone hotlines.

The original proposal seems to have included services from the centre that included

"significant advisory and consultative services" with staff researching particular topics and sending completed research out to practitioners who required more detailed assistance. In addition, staff were to determine what the 'best' of submitted materials were and to publish them. The consultant on the feasibility study wisely noted that there are no models on which to gauge the demands for such services. My understanding of the final outcome of the feasibility study is that it is left to the organizations in support of adult basic literacy, ESL and FSL to form a coalition and come up with a suitable proposal to the appropriate governments to provide the research, advisory and consultative components that were recommended in the original proposal.

My overview of this situation is that it is highly instructive concerning the parameters of a major consultation with stakeholders. First of all, academics were not consulted. If they had been, the range of discussion would have been even more complex. Secondly, governments grappled with real programs and policies which they had to defend and the need to show that they could make these programs and policies work across their entire jurisdiction. Thirdly, they had to show that they were working in true consultation with significant (in their terms) members of their constituency. Advocates and practitioners had to defend their territory, successes, and expertise against being watered down and submerged within a larger identity. There was some hesitancy about having any one existing organization act as the host of the project. As an object lesson for the development of a national centre on literacy research, it should be noted that research, consulting, and advisory services were set aside as too difficult to deal with under this model at this time. It should also be noted that the Francophones preferred having "parallel" services rather than a bilingual staff that would handle both English and French services together; Native representatives wanted to have their own funds to be used by their own local organizations. Variation in regional coverage to address differing conditions across the province was an issue, as was services to practitioners in formal as well as non-formal delivery systems.

I talked with Dr. Marie Gillan of **St. Francis Xavier University**. She indicated that the university offers teacher and tutor training in adult literacy through various of its teaching programs, but that it does not have a formal program of research in that area. Some pressure has been exerted on the university to undertake research of this sort, but there has not been sufficient staff to attempt this.

Drs. Steve Norris and Linda Phillips of **Memorial University of Newfoundland** have developed a proposal for a centre for research on literacy to be housed in the university's Institute for Educational Research and Development, a department within the Faculty of Education. The intention is to pursue basic research on literacy among learners of all ages, but with a focus on younger learners. They are pursuing possible linkages with the office of the provincial literacy policy advisor but recognize that such a linkage may involve compromising some of their long-term research goals for those with direct applications and short-term, visible results. Their reason for proposing a centre is to provide a focus of

research and to maximize the potential to make efficient use of the perspectives of many academic disciplines. The proposal is still under consideration by various bodies.

Dr. Norris also noted that he and Dr. Phillips had also taken part, with researchers from a number of other universities, in the development of a proposal to the Secretary of State for Science and Technology to create a centre of excellence. Originally, literacy was a major focus in the topic of the proposal but, as more and more viewpoints were taken into consideration, the topic became 'acquisition, production, and use of knowledge in an information-rich society.' Literacy is seen as a kind of technology within the larger topic. The research project proposed by Norris and Phillips in the submission for the centre of excellence comptetition involves literacy in the workplace research. Dr. Norris sees such research as moving out of the range of purely academic work. If this centre of excellence were to receive funding, it might change the academic geography of concentrations of (adult) literacy research in the country.

Moving from Canadian examples of institutions involved with adult literacy, I now describe the **Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy** at **Penn State University** in Pennsylvania. The information I have on this institute comes only from its brochure. This brochure notes that illiteracy is a serious problems so "In 1985, the College of Education at Penn State University established the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy as a vehicle for using **the resources of a major land grant institution** to address these issues." I have highlighted part of this quote to emphasize that the university's resources are at least to some extent supporting the institute. The institute has a clear mandate: (1) development and dissemination of a sound conceptual and research base in the field of adult literacy; (2) improvement of practice in the field of adult literacy; and (3) leadership in a coordinated comprehensive approach to the delivery of adult literacy services. To date its work has involved technology in adult literacy, intergenerational literacy, staff development and training, workplace literacy, and special needs populations. From their current prospectus, it appears that most of their projects have been funded by government agencies, foundations, and publishers. Curriculum development and computer assisted learning seem to have formed a considerable part of the kinds of work undertaken, however, the brochure also notes that the institute offers consulting services to adult literacy educators. The stamp of the university's interest in the institute can be seen in the number of resulting publications and computer programs, many of which the institute sells.

Another body with a confusingly similar title to that of the one just described is the **Literacy Research Center** of the **University of Pennsylvania**. Its structure is much like that of the centre at Carleton but is on a much larger scale. It is associated with the University's Graduate School of Education and exists at its discretion. Infrastructure of the centre supported directly by the university is the secondment of Dr. Dan Wagner to be director. Since he is tenured faculty, this does not cost the university money, but they must replace him in his previous duties in his home department. The Graduate School

of Education also pays for one-third of the salary of an administrative assistant, provides the space for the centre, and funds the centre's newsletter. All the other activities of the centre (research and development projects, colloquiums and conferences, technical consulting, and so on) are funded through external sources.

Established in 1983, the centre has the objective "to assist the academic, professional, and governmental communities by advancing our knowledge of literacy through basic and applied research and by contributing to policy development on literacy-related problems in the United States and abroad." Recent research projects have involved: biliteracy acquisition and literacy in multilingual settings; adolescent reading and writing development; reading and writing development in school-aged children; microcomputers and children's literacy; cross-cultural study of literacy retention in the Third World; and literacy in the workplace. In my interview with him, Dr. Wagner noted that the centre holds conferences and colloquium series which help to disseminate the work of the centre and develop the network of informal contacts which enrich the centre's work. A considerable number of faculty members of the university are listed as cross appointed to the centre. He notes that the centre does not have an advisory board, but will get one. According to him, the centre is not particularly activist and that the university does not care about service delivery. He would consider expanding the centre through a consortium arrangement with other institutions and places special importance on networking through computer electronic mail. In response to a question of mine, he suggested that if his centre did not have an identifiable physical location of activity, it would lose a lot of networking potential because people would not be able to drop in and bring their ideas with them.

My sense of this centre is that it is somewhat more academically oriented than the Penn State institute, and, as its name suggests, deals with literacy for children as well as adults. My feeling is that these bodies are composed of university people talking to government people and corporations; university people get the money and funders get the credibility of having their work done by a prestigious university. There is no accountability to advocacy groups much less learners themselves, but as long as there are enough government and private contracts available there is no reason for the university to address such accountability. This is not to imply, however, that learners do not benefit. I am certainly not one to be critical of such centres in academic institutions since I have worked in one for almost a decade. However, as a model for a national centre of research on adult literacy, there are accessibility and leadership problems that would have to be worked out.

As something of a contrast with the Pennsylvania institutions, I chose to describe the **Center for Applied Linguistics** in Washington D.C. I raise this example not because its connections with literacy are central to its mandate but because it provides an interesting institutional model. Founded several decades ago with core funding from the Ford Foundation, it is now a private, non-profit organization which operates solely on

grants it raises for its projects. It is the only U.S. institution devoted solely to language issues with a mandate to promote language study and asssist people in achieving their personal, social, and economic goals through better communication. It has four divisions (English language education and technology, foreign language education and testing, a research division mostly on bilingualism and bilingual education, and international and corporate education). It has informal connections with other institutions through its operations (such as playing a part in the ERIC clearinghouse systems) and through linkages that its staff has with universities, professional organizations and so on. It has a rotating board of directors, usually academics or private sector people, who are selected through the board's nominating committee. The center operates on about $3.5 to $4 million per year, all generated through grants. About $1 million of that is needed for central operating expenses (rent, trustees' costs (but no stipends), and salaries of central administrators). They have no core funding or endowments.

I specifically asked Dr. Dick Tucker, the President, how he would feel about having the centre affiliated in some way with a university. He noted that collaboration with universities, in his experience, had been problematic because of the amount of bureaucracy universities tend to have. He also noted that the centre provides full service to many of its constituencies twelve months a year; this would not be possible if the center were tied to a university's calendar. I then asked if he would like to have core funding from government or some other institution. He said that that would certainly free personnel up to do much more direct service work, but that he needs an autonomous board of trustees to do the work necessary.

I have included this centre as an example of a free-standing institution that seems to have been able to maintain itself over time, develop a high profile and wide range of programs, and stay free from restricting influences of major sources of power such as government and universities. My question about this as a model is whether in Canada one could create the critical mass of start-up money or subsequent grants and income generating activities to achieve the same sort of autonomous stability. I also note that, although it is more accountable to a range of literacy stakeholders through its board of trustees, it must be influenced in its activities by the sources of its funding.

In interesting contrast to the previous two examples, a **National Center for Adult Literacy** has been proposed for the U.S. (Alamprese 1988; Chisman 1989) through a study on the federal role in adult literacy by the Southport Institute for Policy Analysis. This study proposes a non-for-profit quasi-governmental corporation under a board consisting of ex-officio members from relevant federal departments and other members appointed by the President with the approval of Congress. The center would receive $30 million per year, $10 million for each of its three funtions: research; technical assistance and training; and policy analysis. In addition to in-house work, it could contract work out, enter into arrangements with other bodies, form joint ventures, have a visiting scholars program, and undertake revenue generating activities. In addition, three relevant federal departments

would be required to spend $7 million each on adult literacy research in conjunction with the new centre or otherwise. The report is careful to point out that the proposed initiative is not intended to swamp existing work in the area of adult literacy and that "competition is a healthy stimulus to good work in research." There is the intention to coordinate on-going work outside of the national center, but not to marshall it entirely.

This proposal is too new, too large, and too complex to comment on in detail here, but I will highlight certain aspects that drew my attention in the documents. One is that the research and development agenda is supposed to be created on the advice of "a range of individuals involved in basic skills policymaking, practice and research. The agenda should reflect the needs of professionals who are providing basic skills services, as well as those who are engaged in research and model development" (Alamprese 1988 p.39). One seriously wonders how the voice of the practitioner is going to be heard in such a mammoth and government-heavy organization. In bold type in the published version of the proposal is the statement "As its first and highest priority the Center should develop and assist in the adoption of nationally recognized performance standards to measure the basic skills levels and progress of learners and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs" (Chisman 1989 p.25). To be sure, the passage goes on to note that more than one measure will be needed, but the spectre of the already test-crazed Americans forcing even more normalizing measures on its marginalized population is not comforting.

On a more positive note, and one that has direct relevance to Canadian circumstances, it was noted that a quasi-governmental structure was chosen above a centre within an existing federal agency so that its work can cut across organizational boundaries and constituent groups. Also, it appears that the structure of the proposed center and its focus on policy analysis was in part intended to help coordinate policies, programs, research expenditure, and standards among the states.

My personal impression is that an institution this large and so closely linked in governance to the central administration of the country presents a frightening prospect of the whole power structure of the country bearing down on its marginalized citizens. What I like about it is its potential to link federal and state agencies in some sort of coordinated effort. Even if Canada does not establish an adult literacy research centre of any sort, it would be helpful to have some kind of locus for enumerating and describing much less coordinating the kinds of adult literacy research and service delivery that currently exist. Four or five ministries or departments in the federal government and in each of the provinces and territories have some involvement in adult literacy.

As we leave these examples of U.S. research institutions, perhaps this is the point at which to report in detail on comments made by one participant in the current study on the difference in character between Canada and the U.S. in relation to adult literacy research. He said that he feels that U.S. research centres are not sensitive to the kinds of issues that Canadian researchers are interested in. He said that Canada is more caring,

more socially developed, and that, in Canada, the government is more involved in social services, equity issues, public transport, health, education, and so on. He finds that American research leans heavily on private enterprise. While these relationships exist in Canada, they are not the same. We need to examine the partnerships between public institutions; we are discovering that we have a different kind of society because of government roles, for example, in Canadian universities. Therefore, this participant argues, it is important that the federal government play a substantial role in supporting a national centre on adult literacy research.

I made an attempt to get information on research centres on adult literacy outside of North America. I interviewed one participant who had recently spent some time in Britain studying adult literacy work there. He was under the impression that there was no adult literacy research centre as such in Britain either under the aegis of the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) or any of the universities. This does not at all mean that adult literacy research is not being conducted there, but only that it is not centralized in any one institution. A number of British universities are renowned for their work in linguistics and second language teaching and, of course, aspects of literacy are involved in that. Various kinds of research work are being carried out in literacy programs, for example, evaluations, needs assessments, and oral history work. ALBSU workers have promoted the idea of participatory research, an approach to research that has grown largely out of the Frierean movement. The main point of participatory research is that it is done **by** people on problems that concern them and not **on** people by external researchers. (There is an organization in Toronto dedicated to conducting participatory research.)

Another participant told me that an Australian Languages Institute was being set up in Woden, Australia under the Department of Employment, Education, and Training, but I did not have the time to get further information on it.

Critical Factors in a Model for a National Literacy Research Centre

Any model is only as good as **the quality and range of factors that are taken into consideration** in its design. As the computer people say, "garbage in, garbage out." In this section, I list a number of questions that arose from the data that can be seen as factors which participants considered to be important in a model for a literacy research centre. I have tried to give a comprehensible order to this list of factors, but most are interdependent and could come in any order.

A central factor concerns the question of **the definition of literacy used and choices made as to the scope of the work of the centre** within that definition. Several participants expressed concern that a broad and vague scope in addressing literacy research would quickly render the centre unworkable. It was noted that literacy for adults should be the

focus, but several participants also suggested that questions of intergenerational aspects of literacy should be included in a minor role. Research on children's acquisition of literacy is a huge industry supported by educational systems, educational publishers, and all Canadian universities with teacher education programs. Thus, participants generally agreed that research on literacy acquisition for children should not become a focus in the potential new centre. Several participants also noted that the role of literacy learning in English or French by people, particularly adults, whose mother tongue is not English or French (immigrants and Native peoples) should be included but that English as a second language and French as a second language research should not be allowed to dominate. The specific needs of adults with learning disabilities was mentioned as an underresearched area.

The social context in which literacy problems arise and are reproduced was noted as were specific aspects of Canadian society in which illiteracy is perceived to be a problem (the workplace, health and social services, citizenship, and so on). Indeed, I suggest that studies of the functions of literacy for all citizens would provide a valuable baseline against which to study the problems of people with low levels of literacy skills. Research into the most generic aspects of literacy (such as decoding and encoding skills, access to basic literacy programs, teaching approaches, and so on) are seen to be in need of distinction from the role of literacy skills in the context of other kinds of learning (particularly for labourforce participation and the whole field of adult basic education). Two participants specifically stated that the centre should focus specifically on literacy and not branch out into the whole field of adult basic education. One of these participants further specified that the energy for change in literacy work was coming from the non-formal sector (health and social development) and not from formal learning linked to credentialling. He felt that faculties of education were doing substantial work in the area of teaching methods so these were not in great need of research. Two other participants spoke strongly in favour of research and support of adult literacy work relating to the formal sector. Several participants noted the need for research on specifically Canadian issues and solutions. Most participants felt that setting the scope of work for the centre would be difficult, but that other factors, such as who would fund it and set its general agenda would influence this decision strongly.

A second, closely related factor involves **identifying the stakeholders and their particular needs.** A list of stakeholders might include literacy learners, literacy program delivery practitioners, literacy advocacy agencies and organizations, employers, labour, health and social service workers, the media and others involved in communication (technology), government services (for example, corrections), politicians, academics, and research consultants. Such a list might be broken down into categories in several different ways. One way might be to divide those who support study to improve society to better meet the needs of people with low levels of literacy from those who want research into ways of getting illiterates to conform to the literate demands of the rest of society. Another division suggested was between (1) learners who have had barriers to training and

formal education, (2) learners whose mother tongue is not English or French, and (3) learners who have learning disabilities. Yet another distinction was between client groups from specific ethnic and linguistic backgrounds--Anglophones, Francophones, Allophones, Native people; it was suggested that they each may need their own (autonomous) centres or programs of research. Similarly, it was suggested that regional differences were important and that separate institutions or branches of a realistic centre might have to be set up across the country. A further way to categorize stakeholders might be to distinguish between (1) those who are likely to be the subjects of research, (2) those who are likely to conduct research, and (3) those who are likely to sponsor research for their own purposes; as will be suggested below, these latter groups are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It is critical to keep in mind that a number of bodies purport to speak for learners, but the legitimacy of that spokesmanship should always be scrutinized. Finally, distinctions were made between literacy workers who focussed on literacy in social development and those whose work related to preparing learners to get credentials through the formal system, including schools and programs in many post-secondary institutions for adults. Non-formal educational facilities in particular cross many jurisdictional boundaries. Stakeholders and their roles in models of potential research centres will be raised continually below. **Not the least reason for this is that their involvement in the insitution has everything to do with their sense of ownership in the outcomes and thus their willingness to cooperate in implementing resulting findings.**

A systematic needs analysis among all stakeholders must be conducted and then a process by which the power relations and resources available from all parties for a research institution would need to be negotiated to decide on the definition of literacy and priorities for research for the centre. Ensuing from such decisions would be further decisions on a number of lower order factors. One would be **what kind of research would be conducted**. Some types of research that are seen by some as contrasting include quantitative/qualitative; positivistic/naturalistic; participatory/researcher driven; theoretical/applied; demographic or survey/locally focussed. Those not closely involved in research should be warned that there is considerable passion in many quarters with regard to the distinctions between various kinds of research approaches. Some stakeholders clearly favour some types of research over others out of ethical stances, habit, practical need, institutional biasses, and so on. For example, one workplace-oriented participant described a considerable list of possible research studies that needed to be done, but each of them was a survey. He also emphasized the need to conduct studies so that results could be compared with those from other countries so that we could have a sense of how Canada was doing comparatively. An academic participant noted that "universities don't get any marks for non-theoretical, development work." Evidently, some stakeholders trust and benefit from some types of research while others do not. Thus models for a literacy research centre must take into account questions of who benefits from certain types of research, what levels of credibility are attached to different kinds of research, and what kinds of questions are best addressed by various research models. Since a research centre will have to take a stand on research methods, hire or select researchers with certain

qualifications, and make on-going decisions about specific research projects, questions of orientation to research method are important from the beginning. **In sum, research methods must be chosen to suit the topic to be researched; however, researchers' and stakeholders' preferences for certain kinds of research methods may force unsuitable methods on some projects or even cause some topics to be ignored because they are not amenable to preferred kinds of research.**

Intimately tied to the above issue is the question of **who will do the research.** Resolutions to questions raised about what kind of research will be conducted will have a strong impact on the hiring of staff for the centre or selection of boards or personnel to make policy on the centre's program of research, to conduct in-house research, adjudicate proposals, to hire consultants and other researchers, to evaluate results, and so on. Possible researchers include academics, literacy practitioners, learners, consultants, representatives who advocate for people with low literacy skills, and representatives of people who want certain groups of people to measure up to pre-determined literacy standards. There will be differences of opinion about the skills, experience, credentials, and knowledge necessary to qualify to be a researcher. Of course, various kinds of research will dictate to some extent what kinds of researchers are appropriate. However, groups of stakeholders are still likely to disagree in this regard. I was told by two participants, for example, that a report on literacy research written by literacy advocates in Ontario stated that literacy research should be conducted only by learners and practitioners. No doubt some other stakeholders would not agree. (I have not seen this report myself.) Three academic participants noted difficulties they had encountered in working cooperatively on a research project with non-academics. If the centre is associated with certain types of institutions (particularly universities or governments), strong hiring restrictions may be placed on the kinds of people who can be considered for research positions. Also, the ownership and credibility of the outcomes of pieces of research are certain to relate differently to different stakeholders depending on the researchers' qualifications and experience.

The next set of factors concerns **who sets the research agenda.** This question, of course, is closely related to how the centre is funded and what its mandate is. Under vaious circumstances, the agenda might be set by government, major funders, academics, leadership within the centre, advocacy groups or other stakeholders through consultation, and so on. The funding agency or agencies might play a strong role in setting this agenda in the first place by influencing the mandate, or it/they might arrange for others to set the agenda/mandate. A board of directors, advisory board, or an executive director might have a major influence on the mandate and on the continuing evolution of the agenda. If the centre is set up to do all the research internally, then tight control might be maintained on the agenda. However, if would-be researchers are permitted to submit proposals to the centre for research funding, then a considerable amount of control might be relinquished to such researchers. Similarly, if a significant portion of the research done in the centre is based on contracts with external parties, then some control will move to

such external parties. There are many possible configurations to the locus of control in a research institution.

The factors surrounding **how the agenda gets set** are closely related to the previous point. The mandate or the funding agencies' relations with the centre may determine with little flexibility from the beginning how research decisions are made. However, a board of directors may be set up with considerable freedom within the mandate to make decisions and alter or expand policy directions. Also, a strong executive director can use many approaches to influence the direction of the centre's policy. Governments or other funding bodies may choose to dictate the mandate and year-by-year policy entirely. Alternatively, all research might be conducted simply through funding adjudicated proposals received from the public. Initial or regular, on-going needs assessments or consultations can be used to establish the original mandate and to influence policy annually. Special relationships might be set up with significant stakeholder bodies who would influence policy or would actually select projects that they wanted to have researched. Relationships with other granting agencies such as the SSHRC or the MRC or private sector interests might also be established to jointly adjudicate and even support projects. The potential for combinations and permutations of such possibilities are virtually endless.

Related to the questions of what the scope of literacy research topics is to be, what kinds of research are to be conducted, and who sets the agenda is the question of **what work other than 'research' will be done** in the centre. Some possibilities, which may or may not be considered research, include monitoring and analysis of policy and practices in national, provincial or local literacy program delivery, evaluations of literacy programs and/or materials, dissemination of information through conferences, workshops, and clearinghouses, test development and implementation, clinical assessment of learners, research design advice to groups in the public, teacher training, and even 'think tank' meetings. No matter how firmly the centre sets its agenda/mandate to exclude such services, it will be constantly requested to provide them. There may be good reasons to include some or all of such services within the operations of the centre because they may help to support or complement certain (other) kinds of research. Cooperative arrangements might be made between the centre and other bodies which specialize in certain services. For example, one of the participants mentioned research connections he had through his work in assessing learning disabilities. If none of these kinds of services is included in the mandate of the centre, the centre could still act as a clearinghouse of clearinghouses in order to refer requests on to appropriate service deliverers. Although offering even this superficial level of service may be costly, it is likely to have payoffs in terms of public perception of the usefulness of the centre.

Funding and in-kind support for a literacy research centre could come from a variety of sources--government, the private sector, charitable sources, administrative overheads charged to clients who have research done in the centre, or revenue generating

projects of the centre (such as consulting fees, publishing, fees for assessment services, training services, and the like). The interesting questions here are not the sources of funding in themselves, but the possible combinations. A workplace-oriented participant noted that research clients (at least those he was familier with) took the results of research studies more seriously if they had paid for them. Seven of the participants mentioned models that had a significant component of research paid for by contract clients. Three participants noted that it was valuable to have government funding involved for the expressed purpose of strengthening ties within and among governments on the adult literacy issue. However, two participants preferred not to have government funding because of the strings attached to it. Some of the possible combinations of types of funding are exemplified in the models described above. Since funding is likely to be a driving force behind the shape of any eventual centre, its mandate, and activities, close attention must be paid to prospects for funding. **Since people with low levels of literacy skills strongly tend to be among those with least power and resources in our society there is every likelihood of critical tensions arising concerning the mandate of the centre and its (potential) sources of support. In other words, if learners have no monetary resources to bring to the table, can they get on the agenda?**

A number of participants raised the question of the **duration** of the centre. None of them explicitly said that it should be set up to last indefinitely, but concerns were voiced that certain factors, particularly funding, would limit its term of existence. One participant linked the duration of the centre to the quality of its leadership and personnel. Another participant cited an example where a consortium of funders established a social development institution. The people hired to do the work turned into a group of managers, spending their time looking for further research money so that the institution could maintain itself. Such experiences are common in small institutions. Several participants noted the need for sufficient start-up funding so that the centre could get established and locate its own sources of income. Certainly, if the centre were to be set up with an explicit time limit, its mandate and activities would have to be most clearly specified on the basis of a thorough needs analysis.

The final critical factor is the structure of the centre itself. It is the culmination of considerations of all the above factors and more. The next section of this report addresses this question by outlining some of the classic possibilities.

Models for Possible Adult Literacy Research Centres

I hope that it is clear from the discussion above that the scope of possibilities for content and format of adult literacy research centres is extensive and complex and that existing research institutions have undertaken only specific parts of this potential according to their interests and resources. In this section, various institutional hosts of research centres will be discussed in terms of the advantages and disadvantages they might lend to

the situation. I have divided the discussion into three sections: universities, NGOs and private sector, and government, although various options will be described within each. As I noted in the introduction, among the group of stakeholders there is likely to be a divergence of opinion concerning what research is and how it should be accomplished. Thus, after a general description of each type of institution in which a research centre could be lodged, I will outline the attitudes I imagine certain groups of stakeholders would take.

Centres within Universities

In my experience, universities are inclined to prefer quantitative, positivistic, top down, theoretical and demographic research because that is what they get rewarded for in their system of adjudication, but they can be convinced to do other kinds of research either because the client or the topic demand it or because some of their faculty members believe in it. In general, they will do anything (ethical) if their faculty is interested in it, if they are paid for it, and if they are allowed to use the data to write theoretical articles on. They will exercise strong control on the agenda, the research design, and who does the research (their own faculty, staff, or others who meet their criteria). There will be bureaucracy within the university which must be attended to. They will require administrative overheads. Although these overheads may not be higher than costs incurred in other models, the client will have no control over how they are spent. Universities are inclined to seem threatening or hostile to some stakeholders in the literacy field.

Advantages to having **a research centre in a university** include: knowledge and experience with research methods; a grounding in what is already known in the academic literature; an administrative structure; a financial structure that can accommodate cash flow problems; access to useful services such as libraries and technical services; good credibility of the findings; space to house projects; and access to various sorts of academic expertise. Disadvantages include: identification with one institution in one geographic location, usually with only one official language as the medium of communication; may be influenced by rivalries among a group of universities; access largely only to faculty and staff in that university and others within their networks of colleagues; may be expensive relative to other options because of overheads and costs of researchers' salaries; may impose a lot of administrative red tape; the annual schedule of events that dominate the university may interefere with project schedules; may be perceived as inaccessible and elitist; and may not be sensitive to the needs and interests of all stakeholders. **Please note** that universities differ considerably in these factors.

There are several options within the university model for research centres. The **classic centre** is the sort exemplified by the University of Pennsylvania centre which was initiated by the university, partially funded by it, and is largely self-supporting by the research projects it attracts. It has a high profile, good networks with academics

throughout the university itself and through outside contacts. The interests of the researchers and those of project sponsors direct the content of the work. It is not service oriented and spends some of its energies drawing the theoretical relevance out of the work done. Another possibility might be to create a centre run by **a consortium of universities.** This option would extend the pool of researchers and might cover more regions and official language bases. The administrative relations would have to be carefully worked out and constantly monitored for tensions. An example is the joint centre between the University of Toronto and York University on east Asian studies. Another option that is popular currently is for governments to offer money to establish **centres of excellence** in one or a consortium of universities. Usually, the government sets criteria for such centres and entertains bids. Although it is sometimes effective in creating consortia of universities which cover wide geographic areas of the country, this process often forces universities to skew their normal programs and facilities to accommodate the government's criteria. It can exacerbate rivalries among universities, sometimes makes for strange bedfellows, and, according to one participant in this study, centres of excellence never last. A final possibility is for a government or private group to set up **an endowed chair** at a university to promote study of a particular topic. While this option is more likely to enhance teaching than research, it is possible for such a position to generate a focus of interest that eventually results in a program of research.

Research centres in universities are normally associated with one academic department such as psychology, sociology, etc. However, the point of having a research centre in a university is that researchers from all across the institution can bring their expertise to bear on the topic in question. If the interests of learners, practitioners, and governments focus on materials development, methodology, outreach to learners, and so on, as the MTRL feasibility study might suggest, then one participant thinks that these topics are slightly more likely to get a sympathetic hearing in a faculty of education than elsewhere in a university. However, some faculties of education are conservative and are not sensitive to issues in non-formal education.

If numbers mean anything in this less than systematic survey, I submit that five participants considered that a national research centre on adult literacy should be housed in a university setting. Perhaps it will be no surprise for the reader to learn that all of these work in research units in universities. Nine other participants, some from universities, felt rather strongly that a national centre should NOT be housed in a university. I would add my name to the latter list as well. These meaningless numbers aside, most participants saw a national centre, created in whatever form, as involving people from all kinds of backgrounds and institutions, including universities.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Setting up **an adult literacy research centre in an existing non-governmental**

organization might get around some of the problems associated with universities such as their elitist image, their focus on academically 'respectable' work, their identification with a specific geographic location, and their rigid structures. If it were worth their while and suited their mandate, many existing NGOs might be pleased to house an adult literacy research centre. Some possibilities that come to mind, if one thinks of the various stakeholders in adult literacy, might be the Movement for Canadian Literacy, the Canadian Council for Social Development, the International Reading Association of Canada, the Conference Board, the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, the Canadian Council on Learning Opportunities for Women, and so on. The evident concern here is the acceptability of the mandate of the host NGO to all of the stakeholders. It seems fairly clear that none of the above mentioned possibilities would be universally acceptable. The feasibility study cited above for the Ontario Literacy and Language Training Resource Centre provides an indication of the strong feelings among at least some groups of stakeholders that coalitions and consensus decision making is preferred by them to letting any one established organization take the lead role. Even if an existing NGO with a suitable mandate were to be found, one would have to be sure that it had the stability, administrative structure, leadership potential, and capacity to undertake the task of hosting a research centre. NGOs differ greatly in such regards. If a group process of trying to decide on an NGO that could be accepted widely were not to succeed, perhaps one major stakeholder might strike out on its own to establish such a centre in the hopes of gathering support of other stakeholders over the long term.

An alternative to choosing an existing NGO to house a national research centre would be to **create an independent institution** specially for that function. The Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington provides an example of an NGO that was set up specifically to be a research centre for a specific purpose. It required foundation money for core support in order to get it operating, but it now exists independently of governments or universities. It operates on the format of a strong president who reports to a board of trustees. One would like to know more about its history and its relationships with relevant U.S. stakeholders in order to ascertain the applicability of this model to the current situation in Canada. Of particular interest is the question of whether it was formed as a result of cooperative action among a large group of vocal stakeholders or whether it was the work of a small group of leaders. It would be difficult to create an institution like CAL if it had to account to a large group of stakeholders and work on a consensus decision making basis. However, if the Canadian stakeholders were prepared to put their confidence in a small leadership group and if limited term financing were made available to get the institution running, this model might be possible. Several participants made a point of indicating their preference for the development of a completely new organization. One of these noted that it was easier to start up a new initiative if one did not first have to circumvent or get rid of the deadwood in an existing organization. The other said that the new centre should be "new born" without all the old associations with universities, colleges, or other non-educational institutions.

Up to this point we have been considering only those kinds of organizations which normally receive funding for research to be conducted in-house or in collaboration with other bodies. However, under the rubric of non-governmental organizations one must not ignore **foundations** which have a pool of money to be given out for research on the basis of adjudication. Foundations can be powerful in the field of research since their boards set policy and decide on which proposals will be funded. Not only are there private foundations, but there are public ones as well, such as the Trillium Foundation in Ontario. One major value in having an organization which funds research on the basis of proposals is that it lets people in the field direct, to some extent at least, the agenda for research through the proposals they present. The problem with a foundation as an option for a research centre is that it leaves virtually no option for dialogue between and among would-be researchers either to develop collaborative proposals or to link research projects with other kinds of service provisions. Certainly, representatives of a wide range of stakeholders could serve on the board in order to set policies that would reflect a wide range of needs. However, the foundation would have to have a great deal of money to give out in order to provide more than a pittance to each area of concern. The board could conduct regular needs assessment in order to set priorities for programs of funding. I am hesitant to comment further on this topic because I do not know enough about the legislation surrounding foundations or about the history of foundations in various types of social service work. The only point I wish to leave here is that the establishment of a foundation is one option that could be explored.

Finally, in this section, one cannot rule out the possibility that **a private (corporate) sector organization** could establish a centre for research on adult literacy. Such an option, unless strongly philanthropic in nature, would be likely to raise concerns among a number of the stakeholders. It seems that any one organization with enough money to support a research centre would either just do its own in-house research or create a foundation.

Government Research Centres

If government were to undertake control of adult literacy research, there are at least four options for delivery. One would be to have **a granting program within one government department** to which would-be researchers would propose to do research projects. The policies and criteria on which these grants would be given could be set by the government department itself, or in conjunction with an advisory body of stakeholders. While, like the foundation option, this would give a wide variety of researchers across the country the chance to compete, it would not encourage cooperative action. Also, such a program would be distrusted for potential influence by the political process. In addition, there would have to be some demonstration that the people adjudicating the proposals had suitable expertise. As noted in the proposal for a federal centre for adult literacy research in the U.S., as described above, such a program housed in one department alone would

not be likely to take advantage of any potential for linkages among the various federal and provincial departments and ministries whose work impacts on adult literacy.

A second option would be to give **additional funds to the federal granting councils** (SSHRC, NSERC, and MRC) specifically for research on adult literacy. Since funding from these councils is accessible almost exclusively by academics, non-academic stakeholders would be most likely to object to this option. A third possibility could be for **a government department to do all the research in-house** or through tendered contracts. Concerns would doubtless be raised about the range of expertise available in the departmental staff, and stakeholders would almost certainly object to their lack of influence over the research agenda.

A fourth option might be **a quasi-governmental body** as described is the U.S. proposal above. This proposal certainly provides for many ways in which experts and interested parties could interact to raise and solve problems. While money would be put in by the government, there would also be opportunities for revenues to be generated through fees and overheads. This option has at least two limitations in the Canadian context. One is that it seems unlikely that funding on a large scale would be available, indeed, on a large enough scale to create critical mass of activity that would be likely to sustain itself. Secondly, and this is probably a flaw in the U.S. proposal as well, there is considerable distrust of government among a number of significant stakeholders to the extent that the credibility of the centre would be under constant political attack. As noted above, a positive feature of the proposed model is that it could create the opportunity for various arms of governments to work together on interlocking issues related to adult literacy.

Strategies for Creating an Acceptable, Workable Model

In order to take examples and opinions such as those described above and apply them in decision making for the creation of an actual working reseach facility, a certain body of factual information is needed. First, one needs an **inventory** of current activity in support of adult literacy including what kinds and levels of activities are being pursued, by whom, funded by whom, and coordinated (if at all) under what auspices. Evidently, there is a practical level of depth to which one could go in collecting such information . Even problems encountered in doing an inventory could be useful in understanding problems that a national centre would have to address. Secondly, a rationalized sample of stakeholders should be surveyed in a systematic **needs assessment**. What, from their points of view, needs to be done and where should priorities be placed? Finally, an **analysis of these results** should be conducted to indicate where the gaps in knowledge and development are (type and quantity), and why these gaps exist. In my view, this analysis should also include brainstorming on aspects of adult literacy that may have been overlooked, for example ways in which various facets of Canadian society can work to make literacy less difficult and demanding, especially for the general public. The

inventory, needs assessment, and the analysis should result in an overall picture of the scope of the adult literacy field and an identification of priorized areas which need attention.

With this information as background, one could then conduct a **feasibility study for a research centre**. First, one could look at the human and institutional expertise available and match that with the identified needs. Second, one could look at who would be prepared to commit monetary and in-kind support to certain kinds of work. If, as I suspect, the result would be that various kinds of facilities would be identified as appropriate for different kinds of work, then one question would be whether the work of such facilities ought to be coordinated or left to carry on on their own. Also if, as I suspect, that financial resources will be attracted more to some areas of work than others (regardless of the priorities arising from the needs assessment), how does one work toward a more equitable distribution?

Thus far in this section I have been describing a process that might be seen as a necessary prerequisite for establishing a model for a national research centre on adult literacy. However, this discussion could also be seen as a description of the mandate of a small on-going body that would be **a national coordination centre for research on adult literacy**. Given the number and disparity of the stakeholders in the adult literacy field and the wide scope of issues, such a coordination centre might be the most effective federal contribution to adult literacy.

If the views of the participants in this study are at all representative of the field, it seems obvious that any national research centre on adult literacy would have to be multi-faceted in its targets, services, regional accessibility, clients, sources of expertise, and means of doing research and getting research done. The alternative would be to choose a highly restricted mandate from within the larger scope. If the latter were used as an opportunity to sort out with the provinces and other jurisdictions which responsibilities belonged to whom, this would be a useful exercise.

I can't resist the temptation to outline my own preferred options. One is the national coordination centre for research on adult literacy as noted above. I would see it as funded federally and/or provincially for five years. It would be a new NGO with a board of trustees, and executive director, and a permanent staff of two or three. It would receive federal and/or provincial funds to do the inventory, needs assessment, and analysis described above. Further research into certain issues raised in this process would be conducted, again with federal and/or provincial funding or funding from other sources if appropriate. Researchers could be hired by the centre on a temporary basis to work on specific projects, and contractual arrangements with other institutions could also be entered into for some asects of the work. At the end of the five years, enough information and experience would have been accumulated so that a decision could be made on a permanent solution. The centre might be kept on intact with government support; it might

become (partially) self-financing; it might be given a specific mandate; it might be changed in structure; it might be disbanded; etc. Because I believe in the value of focussing on process rather than on product, I like this solution because time would be allowed for gathering information and experimenting with options.

My second preferred option is a combination of a centre like the Center for Applied Linguistics and a foundation. I like CAL because of its independence from governments and academe although it can work for and with them if appropriate. However, I worry about organizations that have to be self-financing. They are ultimately under the control of those who can afford to pay for research. Therefore, I would add a foundation to this model so that would-be researchers from across the country can apply for funding to do the work that they see as important. Thus, this solution allows for control of the agenda and input to a fairly wide range of interested parties. This option would require core support from government or elsewhere for about five years in order to get the centre established. It would also require a large sum of money to be the capital for the foundation. I would prefer to see the foundation money come from private or corporate sources, but there are other possibilities, such as revenues from a lottery (viz. the Trillium Foundation).

I conclude by noting the comment by one of the participants that there is no perfect model for a national research centre. It is the people not the structure that make the difference. From my experience in many kinds of organizations, I entirely agree. Leadership is everything.

Appendix

Participants in this Study

Paul Belanger, Institut de recherche appliquee sur le travail
Arthur Bull, Ontario Ministry of Skills Development
John Cairns, Professor Emeritus, University of Guelph
Roy Fisher, Registrar, School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto
Rubin Friedman, Secretary of State for Multiculturalism
Marie Gillan, St. Francis Xavier University
Stan Jones, Carleton University
Constantine Kapsalis, Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre
Joanne Linzey, National Literacy Secretariat
Steve Norris, Memorial University of Newfoundland
Walter Pitman, OISE
David Ross, Canadian Council on Social Development
Doris Ryan, University of New Brunswick
Michael Skolnik, OISE
Peter Snowdon, Communications and Marketing, Ontario Ministry of Skills Development
Audrey Thomas
Dick Tucker, Center for Applied Linguistics
Dan Wagner, University of Pennsylvania
Jim Wagner, Brock University

(Please excuse any misspellings or garblings of names of participants or their affiliations. I did all my work over the telephone.)

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